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Shah or sham? CIA won't comment on tape

Washington (News Bureau)—CIA Director Stansfield Turner disclosed yesterday that his agency has obtained a copy of a tape-recording purporting to contain instructions from Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to his army to foment a civil war in Iran as a means for him to return to power.

In an interview, Turner declined to discuss whether the CIA had concluded that the tape — broadcast on Los Angeles television station KNXT Wednesday night — actually contained the voice of the shah or was a cleverly doctored fake.

The voice on the 15-minute tape — which KNXT said had been verified as that of the shah by three experts on "voiceprints" — said that by "creating hostility and hatred between the army and the people, by ordering the soldiers to shoot freely... we shall gradually proceed to shore up our powers."

Karl Fleming of KNXT said that he had been told that a participant at a meeting with the shah in Tehran a few weeks ago had secretly taped the meeting and forwarded the tape to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Paris. It was then given to Khomeini's followers, who visited several major news outlets a few weeks ago. Only KNXT concluded that the voice on the tape was really the Shah's.

If the tape is authentic, it may present new problems for the CIA, which has been criticized for failing to predict the turmoil in Iran.

There is considerable dispute among audio experts as to the validity of the tape. According to one source, while KNXT's experts vouched for the authenticity of the tape, citing voiceprints and other technical means, experts hired by other news organizations thought it doubtful.



Stansfield Turner

Says CIA has tape

Turner declined to discuss the Iranian situation in detail. He did say that, generally, the agency realizes that in some countries the regime might think CIA conversations with the opposition mean the U.S. is trying to overthrow the government.

Turner did not say he was talking about Iran where the CIA did help the shah overthrow the Mossadegh regime 25 years ago.

The shah reportedly said on the tape that the U.S. had helped in the shah's effort to suppress the rebellion.

Fleming told The News of an unconfirmed report — not discussed on the tape — that a CIA agent had attended the taped meeting. The CIA was not mentioned on the tape.